

Goddard warns residents about Internet predators, identity theft

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Eastern Arizona Courier

April 9, 2007

There is a 100 percent probability that a child who uses the Internet has been approached by an online predator, Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard said.

"They (children) know about stranger danger in person," but many do not appear to grasp the danger on the Internet, Goddard said to a group of about 20 people at the Graham County Historical Society Museum in Thatcher on April 4.

Thursday, April 12, 2007

Goddard was in Graham County to speak at the annual Meth Awareness Conference. In addition to the museum, he visited the Graham County Senior Citizens Center and the Mt. Graham Safe House. At the museum, Goddard, a Democrat, was greeted by Democrats and elected officials from Graham and Greenlee counties.

He said 167 million kids have their information posted on MySpace.com

"The predators appreciate it," Goddard said.

The Attorney General touched on several topics, including the methamphetamine epidemic, abuse of the elderly and illegal immigration.

At the Senior Center, Goddard talked about fraud and identity theft.

"We work in consumer protection issues. It's part of our mandate," Goddard told a group of about 15 seniors.

He said his office takes crimes against the elderly seriously. Elder abuse is under-reported because the abuser is often a family member.

He also told the seniors to keep their personal information safe from identity thieves by either destroying documents or keeping them in a safe place.

"Destroy, destroy, destroy. I hate to promote a product, but buy a shredder," he said regarding the disposal of old documents.

He also announced the opening of an Attorney General's office satellite center in Safford. It will be aimed at helping victims of scams. He asked that seniors volunteer for training so they can staff the center.

Goddard also encouraged seniors to obtain the one free credit report per year

that they are entitled to receive. These reports will help seniors find out if they are victims of identity theft.